how they began by BlueWall (MsMrs)

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Summary:

Prequel to 'what he needed'. Will is still suffering from nightmares, so at 3 in the morning, he decides to head outside, trying to get some air. He doesn't expect running into his best friend.

how they began

Author's Note:

> I think I'm gonna add to this series in the future. Byler is life.
>
> It's a bit graphic in the beginning, but there's no smut.

He was on the floor. What kind of floor, he couldn‘t tell. Moving his head proved impossible, but there was no way to find out why. All he knew for sure was, the sky was pitch black, and he was cold, so god damn cold. Then he felt it. Snakes? Vines? They were rough, so rough they probably left bruises and scratches on his ice cold skin. He wanted to scream, wanted to escape, get away from this place, but trying to find the necessary strength only made things worse. Whatever was gripping him just began hurting him, intentionally. The pain, god, the blinding pain! It left behind white spots in his vision, as he felt the skin being ripped from his arms and legs. He couldn‘t scream. No sound escaped his throat. And suddenly, it was there, its non-existent face, that gaping hole of razor-sharp teeth mere inches away from him. It reeked of decay, of mold, of blood. The moment he knew, there was no way out, all Will Byers could do was…

...scream. His breath caught in his throat painfully, as he jerked awake, scared beyond belief, but with the comforting knowledge, he was actually in his room, safe from the horrors of last year. Except, he wasn‘t. The sudden urge to throw up overcame him, when he saw it; Will‘s room was a sick and twisted abomination, covered in snow, or repelling spores, he couldn‘t tell. His window lay in shards, scattered between the wall and his bed, letting in the unbearable cold. This time, though, he could move. He could run, and that was all, Will could think of. His blanket was rough and stiff, parts of it even crumbled and broke off when he kicked it off himself. He cried out in pain, and fear, when his bloody, flayed legs came into view. He still had to try, but Will‘s feet gave in as soon as they came in contact with the gravel that covered the floor. This hell he was caught in spun around him until his head...

...painfully collided with his nightstand, sending ripples of pain down his spine. The lights were on. The adrenaline made it easy for Will to come to his senses. Obviously, he had fallen out of his bed, after a particularly terrifying episode. His mind was clear enough to realize that, to be objectively aware it had just been a nightmare. That didn‘t help at all. It never helped, no matter how often he told himself, the Mind Flayer was gone. So was the Demogorgon. Trapped, never to return. Yet, they were still here, their cold grip on Will as tight as ever. Will took a few, deep breaths. A faint smile, at least he thought it was one, pulled on his lips, when he realized how hot it was. Probably the hottest night of the summer. He couldn‘t have possibly found the words to explain what that did to him. Sweating was good. It meant, he was as far away from the Upside-Down as he could possibly get. And still, it wasn‘t enough. Because it was inside of him.

I‘m at Mike‘s. Back before lunch. - Will

The note he had left would likely be enough to stop his mom from freaking out. She‘d never know *when* Will had actually left, which was shortly after 3 AM. He had put on a plain green shirt and short jeans, before leaving in silence. The darkness didn‘t scare him. Above himself, he could see the stars, a reminder of everything that was right, and real about the town he was roaming, only coming across cats and squirrels. The houses, the trees, the grass, everything was intact, people around him were either asleep, or trying to get to sleep; The heat really was something else that night. He had never actually planned to visit Mike, not wanting to bother his best friend with his pathetic little nightmares. Will just needed air, at least, more air than he could get in his house. A few times, he stopped dead in his tracks, realizing he was headed for Mike‘s house. On the occasions, he forced himself to take another turn, and yet, Will found

himself on his way to Mike‘s over and over again. His detour took him to a part of town he had rarely ever seen at night. Just as he passed Melvald‘s, and carelessly turned around the corner that led to the movie theater, paying attention to anything but the sidewalk ahead of him, he collided with something. Something that groaned just as loud as Will did. *Someone*.

„Mike!“ he gasped, trying to keep it down. It was 3 AM, after all.

„Will!“ his best friend breathed, hand clutched to his cheek where Will‘s forehead had hit him. „The hell are you doing out here? God, I‘m sorry.“ Honestly, at that point, Will‘s heart made a funny flip. Mike was there. No matter how, no matter why, he was there. Everything would be fine. Except maybe his hurting forehead.

„Wanted to ask you that.“ he said quietly. He took a look around, to check if they were alone. Needless to say, they were. Hawkins was one of those towns where the sidewalks were rolled up at around 11 PM. Mike‘s confusion had already made way for an only half-honest grin. Something was wrong with him, just as much as with Will.

„I asked first.“ Mike tried at a cheeky tone, unsuccessfully. Will didn‘t waste any time trying to explain, though. Mike wasn‘t okay. Suddenly, that was all that mattered.

„Mike, what‘s wrong.“ he sounded more anxious than he would have wanted.

„Again, wanted to ask you that.“ Mike evaded, but let his shoulders slump soon after. With his head lowered, he sighed „Wanna take a

walk?“ Will didn‘t miss Mike‘s shivering hands. In an effort to lighten the mood, take the edge off it, he chuckled

„I was just doing that.“

„Mind if I join you, then?“

„Where did you wanna go?“

Mike shrugged. „See where we end up? I like the town at night.“

„It‘s peaceful.“ Will agreed, as they began walking next to each other, first in the direction Will had come from. „No one‘s bugging you with their shit.“ *And I‘m not gonna be the one to start that.* Will trusted Mike with keeping track of where they were actually going, because he just couldn‘t keep his eyes off his best friend. The sight of that unruly, never quite straight, black hair, the strong jawline that just started showing, and the depths of Mike‘s dark eyes, did something to him, something he just couldn‘t tell anyone. Something he had to ignore, because it was wrong. Forbidden. Dirty. *Keep it together, Byers. Don‘t ruin the best thing that‘s ever happened to you!*

„Hey, Will.“ He was ripped out of his thoughts.

„Huh?“ Mike turned around to face Will, smiling honestly this time.

„I‘m gonna need your help later today.“

„Sure.“ Will agreed, without even knowing what Mike was about. „Anything you want.“ Mike arched an eyebrow.

„For all you know, I could be asking you to help me wipe my ass.“ he chuckled.

„So?“ Will grunted sarcastically. „I‘d totally be up to that.“

„Gross!“ Mike laughed so loudly, his voice pierced the stale air, and echoed off the walls around them. Will vaguely noticed they were on Garfield Ave. by now. Mike flinched at his own volume, but the town remained silent around them. „So actually, it‘s about this campaign I‘ve just finished last night. Could you maybe... draw some of the places I‘ve come up with?“

„Won‘t that spoil it for me?“

„It won‘t.“ Mike shook his head. „Promise, I‘m only gonna let you know what‘s absolutely necessary. It‘s just that... your drawings always make these things... become real. Does that sound weird?“

„Totally. But I‘m in.“ Will didn‘t need to think about it for a second. Their next D&D night was set for Saturday, and he already knew it was gonna be this week‘s highlight. Mike‘s grin grew wider, but the tension hadn‘t left him, Will knew him too well. He had even put his hands in his pockets, to hide how they were still trembling. They walked for minutes on end, without speaking a word, Mike staring straight ahead, Will staring at Mike, trying to decipher his now

expressionless face.

„Max and El are really catching up to us.“

„You‘re still about D&D?“

„Yeah.“

„I guess they are.“ Will shrugged. „I‘m just glad you‘re good with Max now.“ Mike only made a vague move with his head, as if he wasn‘t really listening anymore.

„Did you wanna go here?“ he asked, which prompted Will to direct his gaze from Mike to their surroundings. They had ended up in front of the Hawkins High Football field, currently completely deserted. The grass had turned brown in the summer heat, and still, there wasn‘t a noise to be heard, except Will‘s and Mike‘s somewhat heavy breathing. They crossed the field, coming from the parking lot. In the distance, Will could make out an old Ford pickup, that belonged to the janitor, Mr Mercer, who lived just on the other side of the road from the parking lot.

„I thought you were keeping track of where we‘re headed.“ Will snickered. „Uh... it‘s weird, isn‘t it?“ The sight of his future school filled Will with a sense of discomfort. Looking at Mike again, though helped that.

„Wanna sit down?“

Will nodded, and together, they headed for the bleachers, climbing up to the top row, where they sat on the hard wooden bench next to each other. A silence ensued between them that Will didn‘t really know what to make of. At least, his heart rate was stabilizing. He really wasn‘t what one would call athletic.

„Makes you wonder.“ Will finally broke the silence. „Think we‘re gonna make it in High School?“ He had thought about it. Long and hard, but to no avail. Will wasn‘t sure, he honestly didn‘t know if he‘d be able to stand it. Spending nights thrashing around in his bed, and days being close to the boy he loved, without ever being able to admit this to anyone.

„I guess so.“ Mike sighed. That was all. Too short. Nothing insightful. It wasn‘t like Mike to say things like these. And when had his voice become so thick anyways? For the last minutes, Will had been staring at the flag post on the other side of the field. Upon hearing Mike talk, his head spun around though. Just in time to notice a single teardrop fall from his friend‘s cheek into his own lap.

„Mike?“

Next to Will, Mike flinched, suddenly trying to wipe his eyes with still trembling hands. It took a bit of trial and error, Will even hit Mike in the chest, but finally, he managed to capture one of his hands.

„What-“

„Mike, what‘s going on?“ Mike hesitated, but eventually mumbled

„Nothing. Seriously, it‘s just stupid.“

„Mike-“

„I don‘t wanna bother you, okay?“ he snapped. „You‘ve got enough to deal with.“

„Mike-“ Will tried again, voice small and uncertain.

„What?“ Mike‘s head snapped around, leaving Will in awe of the flying black hair that seemed to blend with the dark around them.

„I... I didn‘t want to bother you either. But... here we are.“ It was only now that Will noticed how forcefully Mike pressed his hand. „Tell me what happened?“ Next to him, Mike took a deep breath, again refusing to look at him. He kept quiet for a few more moments, and Will didn‘t push him. Eventually, he said, barely audible

„I have these nightmares. I‘ve had them for months.“ Will understood without needing to hear another word. Still, he let Mike speak, tightening the grip on his friend‘s hand. „It‘s always about... you know... a-and I‘m s-s-scared it‘s gonna h-happen again, before I c-c-could manage to b-build up t-the courage to... I wouldn‘t g-get a... a chance to...“ Seeing Mike, crumpled into himself like that, his head dipped, Will felt hot tears trickle down his cheeks. He gave in to the urge to wrap his arms around Mike, as best as he could, cursing his

own small stature. But Mike leaned against him.

„It‘s not gonna happen again. Mike, it‘s over, for good.“ Will whispered.

„B-but you‘re n-not fine, are you?“ Will couldn‘t answer that without making it worse for him, and Mike just wouldn‘t stop trembling all over. Sure, he wasn‘t fine. He even doubted those scars would ever heal. But so far, he had believed Mike was the strong one. Full of energy, unaffected by everything that had happened. The one Will looked up to, because he had gotten over the terrible events. He still looked up to Mike, but his stomach now clenched painfully at the thought of his friend keeping his suffering hidden for so long. „Y-you know... when t-that thing h-had you, I was s-s-so close to t-telling you.“

„Telling me what?“ Will breathed. Mike swallowed hard.

„T-that I l-like... I-I‘m in...“ Will tightened his embrace involuntarily. His heart had started fluttering, trying to break out of his chest, not quite sure if he understood what Mike was trying to say. It looked like Mike couldn‘t go on, but Will couldn‘t contain himself anymore. He didn‘t want to think about that he could very well be ending everything.

„Mike, I like you.“ He said it so fast, he couldn‘t understand the words himself, and Mike barely reacted, so Will tried again, slower, as clear as he could this time. „I like you. I‘ve been in love with you for... I don‘t even know.“ This time, wet hiccups erupted from Mike. „Did you... did you want to tell me-?“

„Yeah.“ Mike choked up, his face pressed into Will‘s shoulder. „A-and if I c-can‘t stop it f-from getting y-you-“ Will desperately wanted to cheer, to shout out loud that his best friend, the one he had loved since he could remember, actually liked him. That very moment, he was sure he‘d be capable of a backflip. But Mike was too far gone. Too broken, and it hurt.

„It‘s not gonna get me.“ Will shushed, reassuring even himself. „It‘s just dreams. I know what it feels like. You know what?“ Mike shook his head against Will. He continued, feeling stronger than he ever had. „I had a nightmare too. And I‘m fucking glad I did. Because now I‘m here. With... with you.“ Mike‘s breathing slowed down only slightly, and he pulled back, revealing his swollen, red eyes to Will, who was sure, he didn‘t look any better himself. They were so damn close to each other, noses almost touching, and Will didn‘t know what brought the sweat to his forehead, the summer heat, or the heat that was now spreading from the inside of his stomach. „It‘s terrifying.“ he admitted. „I mean the nightmares.“

„Can I... can I make it better?“

„You already are.“ Will breathed without hesitation. „You can‘t imagine how l-long I-“ Now it was Will‘s turn to burst out in heavy sobs, but only for a second or two. All of a sudden, the wind was knocked out of him entirely, when he saw Mike rushing forwards. Will felt dry, cracked up lips on his, and he could taste the salty droplets, not sure if they were his own, or Mike‘s. But it didn‘t matter. For the few seconds it lasted, Will felt complete. He suspected, he was grinning like an idiot when Mike pulled away.

„Sorry I didn‘t tell you earlier.“ he said, no trace of sobs or hiccups left.

„Technically, you haven‘t actually told me yet.“ Will chuckled.

„Okay.“ Mike let out a long sigh, bracing himself. „Will... I like you. I‘ve liked you for so long. And I‘m... I‘m scared of losing you again. I think I-“

Will didn‘t let Mike finish, instead rushing forward to press their lips together again, and to swallow the remaining words. Out here, in the middle of the hottest night of the year, at a place where both of them would likely be shoved around by bullies in the near future, Mike and Will kissed, and Will was sure, this was all he‘d ever need to survive.